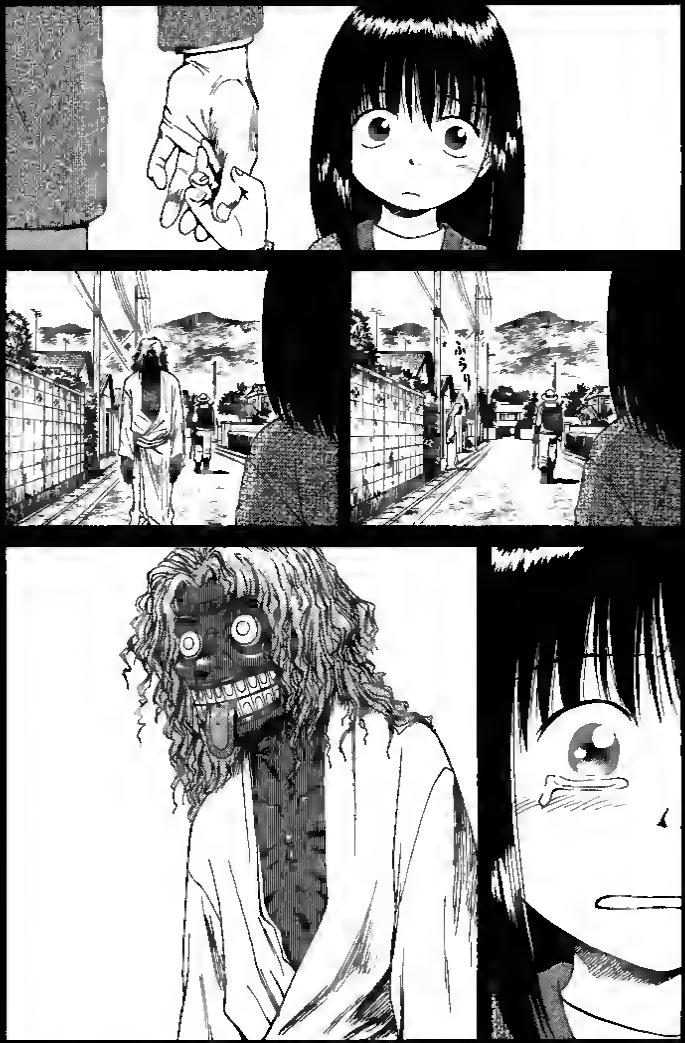
#2
Okurimono



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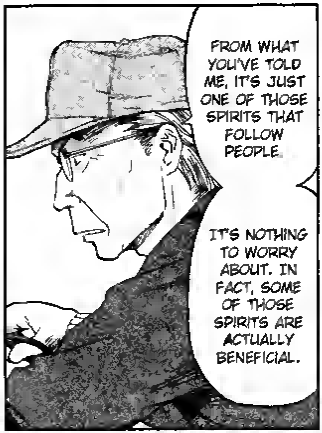
TRANSLATOR: SUMMER SOLDIER
EDITOR: MEDIC

...
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
SOB SOB SOB
GRIP
...
SO YOU SAW SOMETHING?
WHO LOOKED REALLY SCARY.
I JUST SAW SOMEONE ....
SOB SOB
BUT NOBODY ELSE SEES ANYTHING...
HERE, HOP ON TO MY BACK.
DON'T CRY, SHIZURU.
OKAY.
IS THIS THE FIRST TIME?
NO.
I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE

THINGS SHOULD BE PRETTY HECTIC FOR YOU, WITH MIZUKI BEING BORN.
DON'T WORRY, HER GRAND-MOTHER'S HERE TOO.
SHIZURU NEEDS TO LIVE OUT HERE IN THE COUNTRY FOR A WHILE.
SHIZ-URU.
YOU CAN SEE THINGS THAT OTHER PEOPLE CAN'T.
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THAT.
BUT THE PROBLEM IS, YOU'LL SCARE OTHER PEOPLE. YOU DON'T WANT YOUR FRIENDS TO BE AFRAID OF YOU, RIGHT?
YOU HAVE TO KEEP THEM TO YOUR-SELF, SHIZ-URU.
DON'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT THEM EXCEPT US.

DON'T TELL
ANYONE.

JUST LEAVE IT ALONE.


FROM WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME, IT'S JUST ONE OF THOSE SPIRITS THAT FOLLOW PEOPLE.
IT'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. IN FACT, SOME OF THOSE SPIRITS ARE ACTUALLY BENEFICIAL.

"CAW"

IF HE DOESN'T SEE IT, THERE'S NO HARM DONE.
JUST FORGET ABOUT IT.

...BUT
I HAVE A BAD FEEL-ING ABOUT THIS.

NO NEED TO BE SHY.
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!!
SO YOU HAVE A CRUSH ON THIS PERSON?
ニー
..HE'S MY...
FRIEND'S BROTHER ..
NO!!
EEK!
HEY, MAYBE I COULD HAVE THE SPIRIT HAUNT ME AND BRING IT HERE
AND THEN GRANDPA COULD DRIVE IT AWAY. I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE AN EVIL SPIRIT IS IT?

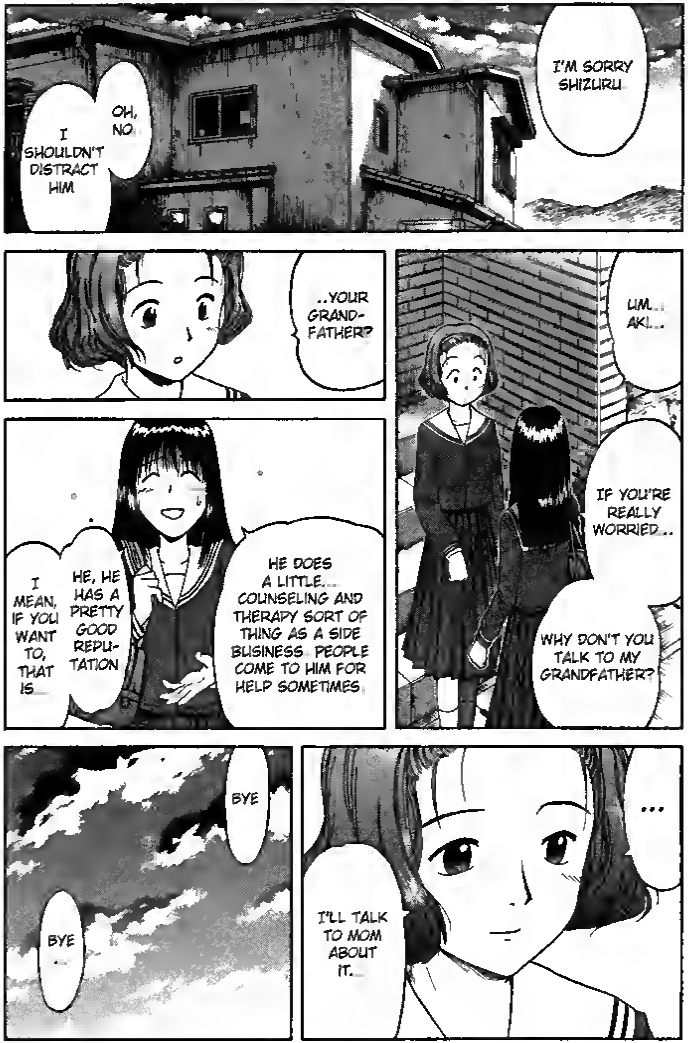
I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS THAT'S WHY I'M...
MIZUKI'S BODY MAY BE SPIRIT-FRIENDLY, BUT TRANSFERRING A SPIRIT LIKE THAT IS A BIG DEAL.
IT'LL REQUIRE A POTENT SPELL TO DO THAT.
WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO THEN?
"CHCK"
NOTHING.
WE JUST LEAVE IT ALONE.
"CHCK"
WE CAN'T BE EXPECTED TO DO EVERYTHING
I'VE TOLD YOU THAT MANY TIMES BEFORE
...

I SAW YOUR BROTHER AT THE STATION.
HEHE
ACTUALLY THERE IS I DON'T HAVE A SHIRT THAT MATCHES THE SKIRT I BOUGHT THE OTHER DAY.
HE DIDN'T LOOK VERY WELL.
MMM?
AK!
IS THERE ANYTHING THAT'S TROUBLING YOU LATELY?

MY BROTHER GETS GOOD GRADES, UNLIKE ME
HE WAS ALWAYS AMONG THE TOP AT ICHI HIGH SCHOOL. WISH HE'D SHARE SOME OF HIS BRAINS WITH ME, YA KNOW?
MY BROTHER WAS ALWAYS SUPER-SERIOUS, BUT HE'S GETTING WORSE LATELY STUDYING ALL THE TIME.
I MEAN, IT'S BECAUSE OF THE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAM... BUT THE WHOLE HOUSE IS STARTING TO GET REALLY TENSE ..
OH COME ON, YOU GET GOOD GRADES TOO.
WELL ANYWAY, I GUESS SMART PEOPLE HAVE THEIR OWN WORRIES TO DEAL WITH.
WOW, THAT'S REALLY SMART
...
I THINK HE'S STARTING TO FEEL A LITTLE ..
ANXIETY.
THE ENTRANCE EXAMS ARE ONLY A FEW MONTHS AWAY. EVERYBODY STUDIES NOW, SO THE OTHER STUDENTS ARE STARTING TO CATCH UP TO HIM.
AND HIS SCORES FROM THE SUMMER MOCK EXAM WAS APPARENTLY WORSE THAN HE EXPECTED.

BUT I THINK THAT'S PROBABLY MAKING THINGS WORSE
MY PARENTS ARE ALWAYS TELLING HIM TO RELAX.
AH...
IT'S PROBABLY ADDING TO THE PRESSURE
びくっ
I GUESS THINGS WILL BE ALRIGHT IF HE PASSES.
BUT IF HE FAILS..
YEAH..
ガチャ

HELLO..
WHERE'S MOM?
NOT HOME YET.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO CRAM SCHOOL
OH
HI..
I'M NOT FEELING TOO WELL, SO I'LL STUDY HERE
DON'T MAKE TOO MUCH NOISE.


I'M SORRY SHIZURU
OH, NO
I SHOULDN'T DISTRACT HIM
..YOUR GRAND-FATHER?
UM... AKI...
IF YOU'RE REALLY WORRIED...
WHY DON'T YOU TALK TO MY GRANDFATHER?
HE DOES A LITTLE... COUNSELING AND THERAPY SORT OF THING AS A SIDE BUSINESS. PEOPLE COME TO HIM FOR HELP SOMETIMES.
HE, HE HAS A PRETTY GOOD REPU-TATION
I MEAN, IF YOU WANT TO, THAT IS...
BYE
BYE
...
I'LL TALK TO MOM ABOUT IT...

I HAVE TO KEEP THESE THINGS A SECRET TOO
IT WAS LARGER THAN THE LAST TIME I SAW IT.
AND ITS COLOR WAS THICKER.
BUT I ALWAYS THINK ...
THAT IT MUST BE HARDER FOR YOU.
...
...
SHIZURU, YOU'RE 14 YEARS OLD NOW.
YOU HAVE ENOUGH EXPERIENCE TO KNOW BY NOW.
CAN'T WE JUST TELL HIM HOW TO DRIVE IT AWAY?
DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY

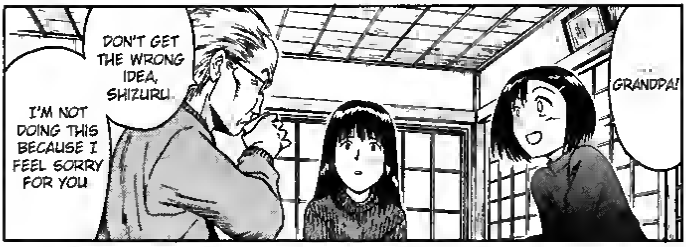
THE SPIRITS' PRESENCE ARE A MATTER OF COURSE. WE MERELY NEGOTIATE WITH THEM.
WE ASK THEM TO LEAVE.
WE'RE NOT IN A POSITION TO JUST DRIVE ANY RANDOM SPIRIT AWAY.
...
...
I SUPPOSE I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE DOING THIS
YOU THINK YOU'RE BETRAYING YOUR BEST FRIEND BY NOT TELLING HER WHAT YOU CAN SEE.
YOU JUST WANT TO FEEL BETTER ABOUT YOURSELF BY HELPING HER OUT.
AND NOW YOU'RE TRYING TO MAKE ME DO THE WORK.

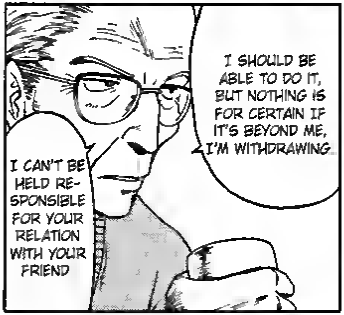
GRAND-PAAAA...
BUT...
YES
THE PERSON WHO WROTE "TOONO MONO-GATARI?"
HAVE YOU HEARD OF KUNIO YANAGIDA?
YOU'VE HEARD OF HIM, RIGHT?
NOTE: KUNIO YANAGIDA - FAMOUS SCHOLAR OF JAPANESE FOLKLORE
HE WROTE A BOOK CALLED "YOUKAI DANGI". IN ONE OF THE CHAPTERS, HE PROVIDES A LIST OF THE SPIRITS THAT APPEAR IN THE FOLKLORES HE RESEARCHED THROUGHOUT JAPAN.
IN ONE OF THE SECTIONS OF THE LIST HE DESCRIBES SPIRITS SUCH AS "OKURI-SUZUME", "OKURI-INU", "MUKAE-INU", "OKURI-ITACHI", "BETOBETO-SAN", "BISHAGATSUKU".

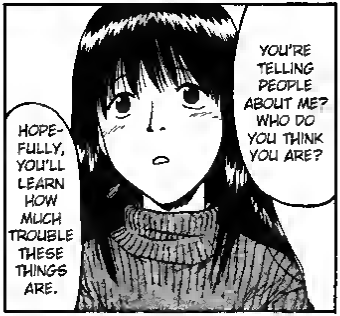
NOTE HONJO-NANAFUSHIGI A SERIES OF SEVEN STORIES/RUMORS INVOLVING GHOSTS AND SPIRITS THAT SPREAD THROUGH EDO (FORMER NAME OF TOKYO) IN THE EDO PERIOD "OKURI-CHOUCHIN" IS ONE OF THEM
SO THE SPIRIT THAT SHIZURU SAW...
...IS ONE OF THOSE. ALTHOUGH IT'S ODD THAT THE SPIRIT WOULD HAVE A MOUTH IN ADDITION TO FEET.
"BETOBETO" AND "BISHA" ARE BASICALLY ONOMATOPOEIA FOR SOUNDS OF FOOTSTEPS.
MUKAE-INU ARE DESCRIBED DIFFERENTLY IN SOME REGIONS, BUT FOR THE MOST PART..
THESE SPIRITS FOLLOW YOU.
THEY ALSO APPEAR IN "OKURI-CHOUCHIN" FROM THE HONJO-NANAFUSHIGI
MANY REGIONS IN JAPAN HAVE STORIES OF VARIOUS FORMS OF OKURI-INU, BUT THEY CAN BASICALLY BE DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS.
ONE OF THEM FOLLOW YOU HOME TO PROTECT YOU FROM WOLVES,
AND THE OTHER ...
FOLLOW YOU HOME SO THAT THEY CAN EAT YOU.
...!

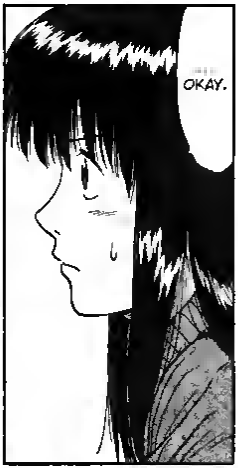
...
THESE PHANTOMS WILL HAUNT JUST ABOUT ANYONE, AND MOST TIMES, THEY'RE GONE BEFORE YOU KNOW IT. BUT FROM WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME, IT SEEMS HE'S ALLOWED THIS ONE TO GROW CONSIDERABLY
MAYBE IT'S STARTING TO EAT INTO HIS MIND
SO YOU . DIE?
NOT LIKELY.
...
I'VE SAID THIS MANY TIMES, SHIZURU.
THIS JOB IS DELICATE.
AND BESIDES ..
DISPELLING THEM RECKLESSLY CAN BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE SOMETIMES YOU MAY END UP WITH SOMETHING WORSE
YOU NEED TO ABSTAIN FROM BEING EXCESSIVE
YOU DON'T WANT TO PROVOKE THE SPIRITS BY BOTHERING THEM TOO MUCH.

YOU'RE THERE TO MEDIATE. YOU HAVE TO KNOW YOUR PLACE.
AND THERE ARE SOME SPIRITS THAT I CAN'T, THAT I SHOULDN'T DISPEL. I NEVER ACCEPT THOSE REQUESTS TO BEGIN WITH.
THAT'S WHY I NEVER DO THIS UNLESS I'M ASKED. AND IF THINGS LOOK DANGEROUS, I'LL RETREAT.
...
OKAY ..
YOU CAN SEE THE SPIRITS, SHIZURU, BUT YOU DON'T HAVE THE SKILLS OR THE RESOLVE
AND YOU'RE FORCING THE BURDEN ON ME, WHICH I FIND ANNOYING
KEEP THAT IN MIND!
YOU WANT ME TO DO IT, RIGHT? THAT'S THE FEE.
I'M TAKING IT OUT OF YOUR ALLOW-ANCE.
...?
.. 5,000 YEN

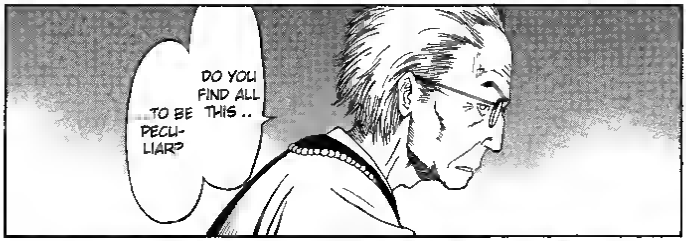

GRANDPA!
DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA, SHIZURU.
I'M NOT DOING THIS BECAUSE I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU.

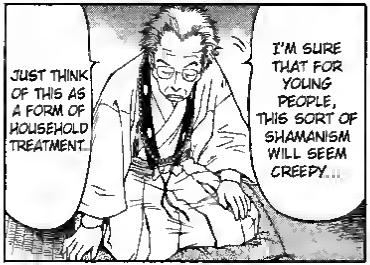

I SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO IT, BUT NOTHING IS FOR CERTAIN IF IT'S BEYOND ME, I'M WITHDRAWING.
I CAN'T BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR RELATION WITH YOUR FRIEND


YOU'RE TELLING PEOPLE ABOUT ME? WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
HOPEFULLY, YOU'LL LEARN HOW MUCH TROUBLE THESE THINGS ARE.

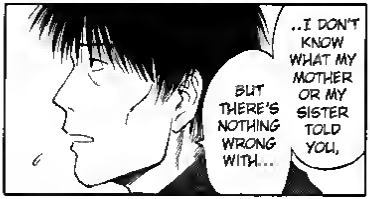

OKAY.

ジジ…
奉納

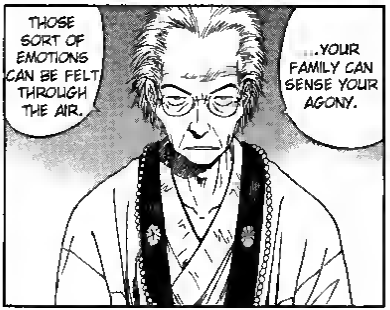

DO YOU FIND ALL THIS .. ...TO BE PECULIAR?

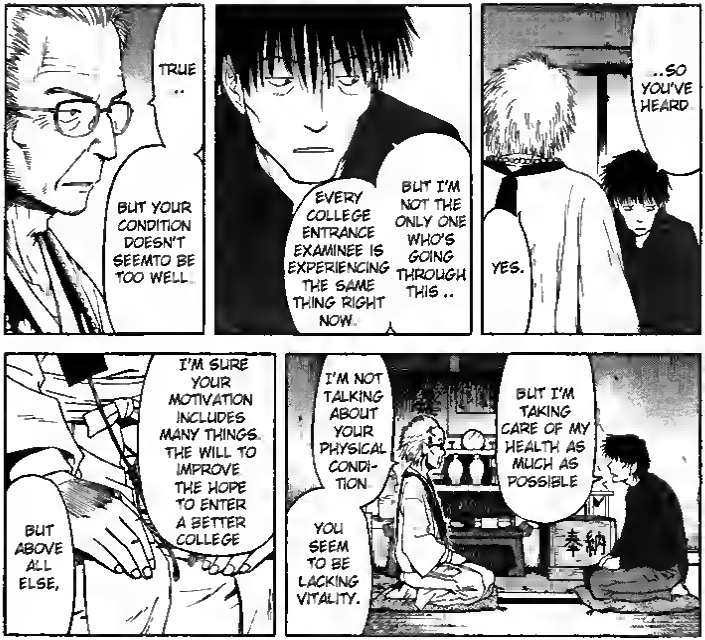

I'M SURE THAT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, THIS SORT OF SHAMANISM WILL SEEM CREEPY... JUST THINK OF THIS AS A FORM OF HOUSEHOLD TREATMENT.

OH NO .. I'M NOT. . GLAD TO HEAR THAT. OH, AND PLEASE RELAX.


..I DON'T KNOW WHAT MY MOTHER OR MY SISTER TOLD YOU, BUT THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH...

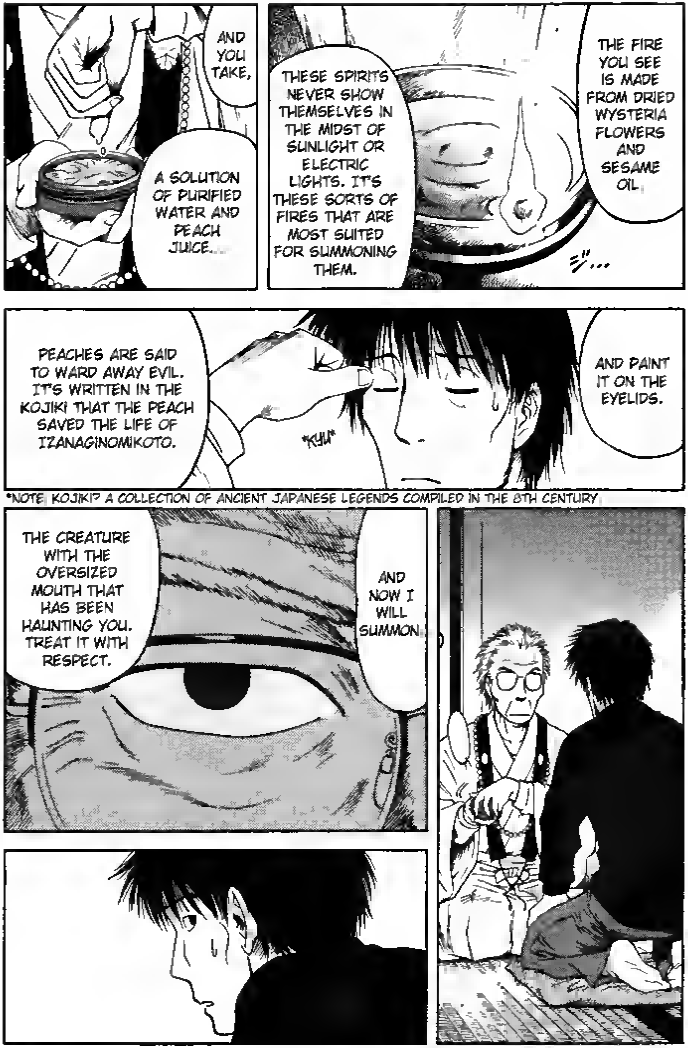
I HEAR YOUR GRADES AREN'T WHAT YOU'D LIKE THEM TO BE ...


THOSE SORT OF EMOTIONS CAN BE FELT THROUGH THE AIR. ..YOUR FAMILY CAN SENSE YOUR AGONY.


TRUE ..
BUT YOUR CONDITION DOESN'T SEEMTO BE TOO WELL..
EVERY COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINEE IS EXPERIENCING THE SAME THING RIGHT NOW.
BUT I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO'S GOING THROUGH THIS ..
..SO YOU'VE HEARD
YES.
I'M SURE YOUR MOTIVATION INCLUDES MANY THINGS. THE WILL TO IMPROVE THE HOPE TO ENTER A BETTER COLLEGE
BUT ABOVE ALL ELSE,
I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT YOUR PHYSICAL CONDI-TION.
YOU SEEM TO BE LACKING VITALITY.
BUT I'M TAKING CARE OF MY HEALTH AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE
奉納
INITIALLY, IT WASN'T MUCH.
BUT AS TIME PASSED, IT BECAME ALL YOU CAN THINK ABOUT...
THE FEAR OF BEING BEATEN. THE FEAR OF FALLING DOWN THE GRADE RANKING. THE FEAR OF BEING RIDI-CULED.
IT'S FEAR

...
WE HAVE TO FIND WHERE THE ROOT IS.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND IT YOURSELF. BUT IT'S BEYOND YOUR CONTROL NOW.
YOU'RE TOO DESPERATE TO THINK CLEARLY. YOU CAN ONLY CONCENTRATE ON TRYING NOT TO FALL.
...
R.. ROOT?
...
..A CLASS-MATE?
HE SMOKES CIGAR-ETTES.
I SEE. IT'S HIM.
HIS GRADES STARTED IMPROVING SUDDENLY.
THE PERSON YOU'VE ALWAYS HELD IN CON-TEMPT ...
THE PERSON WHO DOES AS HE PLEASES.
...!

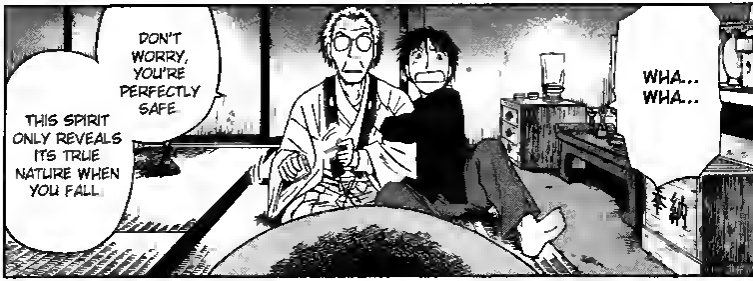
IT MUST BE AN UNPLEASANT REALITY... FOR SOME-ONE LIKE YOU.
WH-WHO TOLD YOU...
NO-BODY.
TOP SCORERS OF THE SUMMER EXAM
I CAN SEE IT.
...
BUT THAT WAS MERELY THE START.
WE'LL NEED TO SUMMON THE SPIRIT THAT'S DOING THIS TO YOU.

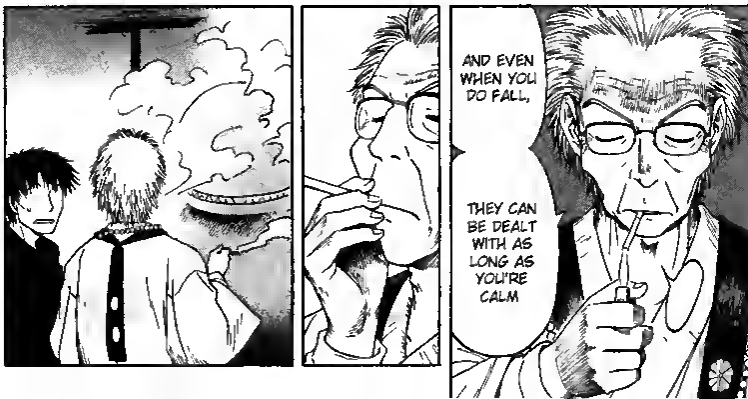

AND YOU TAKE,
A SOLUTION OF PURIFIED WATER AND PEACH JUICE...
THESE SPIRITS NEVER SHOW THEMSELVES IN THE MIDST OF SUNLIGHT OR ELECTRIC LIGHTS. IT'S THESE SORTS OF FIRES THAT ARE MOST SUITED FOR SUMMONING THEM.
THE FIRE YOU SEE IS MADE FROM DRIED WYSTERIA FLOWERS AND SESAME OIL.
=/...
PEACHES ARE SAID TO WARD AWAY EVIL. IT'S WRITTEN IN THE KOJIKI THAT THE PEACH SAVED THE LIFE OF IZANAGINOMIKOTO.
"KYU"
AND PAINT IT ON THE EYELIDS.
THE CREATURE WITH THE OVERSIZED MOUTH THAT HAS BEEN HAUNTING YOU. TREAT IT WITH RESPECT.
AND NOW I WILL SUMMON

*NOTE: KOJIKI? A COLLECTION OF ANCIENT JAPANESE LEGENDS COMPILED IN THE 8TH CENTURY

...?!
AAAA-
GGHHH!!

...
DON'T WORRY
AAA GH!
!
SH-SHIZURU

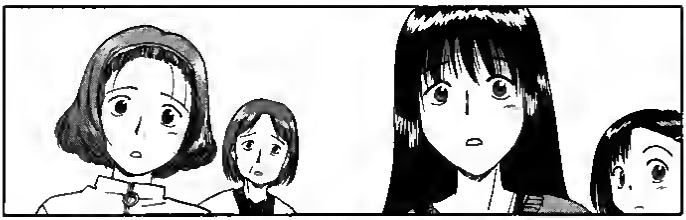

DON'T WORRY, YOU'RE PERFECTLY SAFE
THIS SPIRIT ONLY REVEALS IT'S TRUE NATURE WHEN YOU FALL
WHA... WHA...

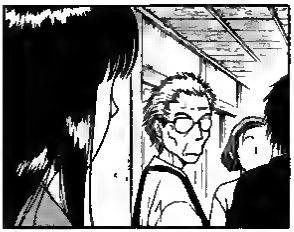

AND EVEN WHEN YOU DO FALL,
THEY CAN BE DEALT WITH AS LONG AS YOU'RE CALM

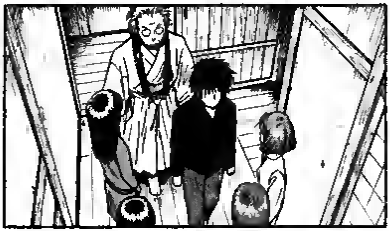
ALTHOUGH IT'S PROBABLY NOT THE CIGARETTE ITSELF THAT THEY'RE REACTING TO.
MANY OF THESE PHANTOMS DISLIKE CIGARETTES.
?!
HAVE A SMOKE, SON.
THIS IS PART OF THE SPELL.
I...
I'M...
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH HAVING OTHER PEOPLE SELECT YOUR PATH FOR YOU. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WILL MAKE THE FINAL CHOICE, AND YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WILL WORK TO FULFILL IT.
WHY IS THAT SOMETHING TO BE ASHAMED OF? WHAT YOU'RE DOING IS VERY ADMIRABLE

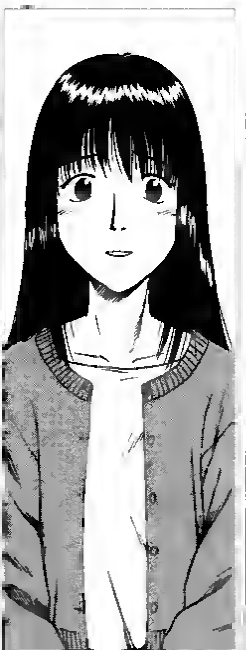
...
...WERE YOU ENVI-OUS?
I WAS...
JARA
I RE-SPECT-FULLY MAKE THIS RE-QUEST.
OKAY
COUGH COUGH COUGH COUGH

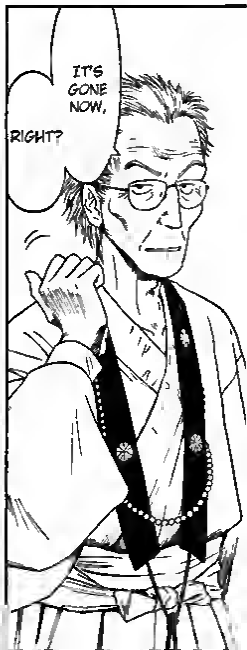
THERE IS NO NEED TO TROUBLE YOURSELF WAITING FOR HIS RECOVERY.
PLEASE GO ON AHEAD!
THOUGH THE ESCORT YOU HAVE PROVIDED TO THIS INDIVIDUAL IS MUCH APPRECIATED. SAID INDIVIDUAL IS FATIGUED AND EXHAUSTED AND IS IN NEED OF A SLIGHT REST.
GO AWAY!!
IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA FOR YOU TO ASK TOO.
G..
GO..



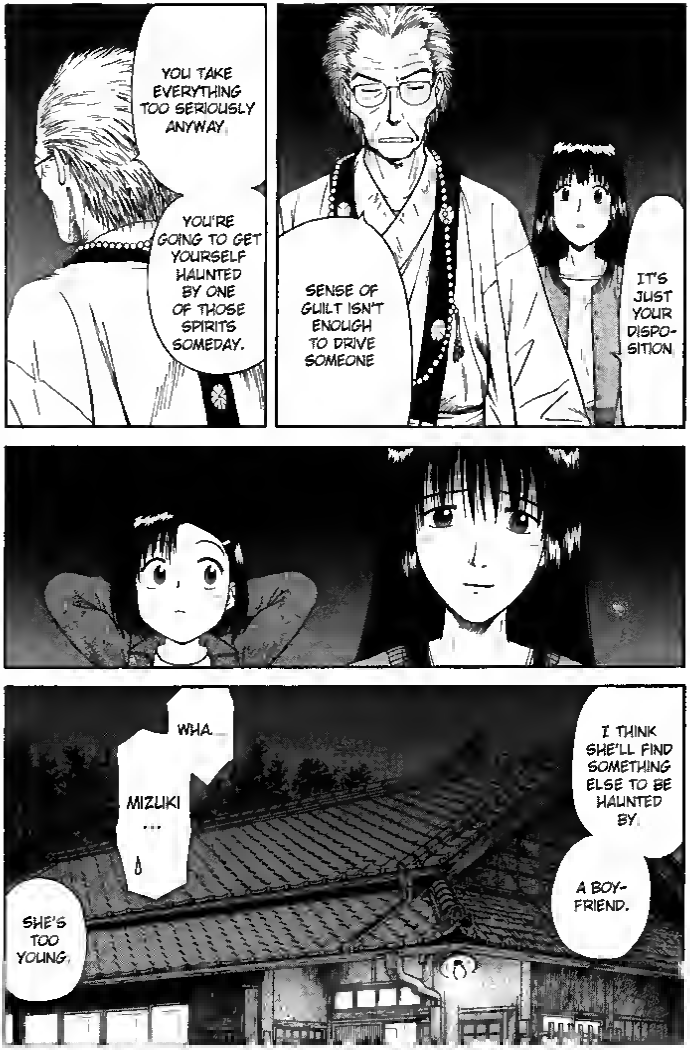







IT'S GONE NOW, RIGHT?

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR STUDIES
BUT DON'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO HARD
OKAY
GRAND-PA...
MMM?
DO YOU THINK THAT I WOULD'VE ...
TRIED TO HELP OUT AKI IF I COULDN'T SEE THE SPIRIT?


YOU TAKE EVERYTHING TOO SERIOUSLY ANYWAY.
YOU'RE GOING TO GET YOURSELF HAUNTED BY ONE OF THOSE SPIRITS SOMEDAY.
SENSE OF GUILT ISN'T ENOUGH TO DRIVE SOMEONE
IT'S JUST YOUR DISPO-SITION.
WHA...
MIZUKI ...
SHE'S TOO YOUNG.
I THINK SHE'LL FIND SOMETHING ELSE TO BE HAUNTED BY.
A BOY-FRIEND.